

DMACC's Vision for the SharePoint Portal

Communication, Collaboration, Community-Building

The power of SharePoint is as much in its possibilities as in its technologies. Because of it, the opportunities for communication within the college and as an outreach tool with our communities and audiences are amazing. Even before our district-wide implementation, scheduled for Spring Semester 2004, it has dramatically changed the way we look at what we do at DMACC, from the smallest to the largest and most important tasks.

The portal inspired an entirely new website design and restructuring.

It is allowing us to eliminate our intranet, and move often-used forms into the specific area of the portal where they are needed.

It has brought together six campuses, five executive deans, and seven campus webmasters who, for the first time in the district's history, have agreed on protocols for all of the campus sites, giving us the opportunity to both emphasize the district's unity and to showcase the unique aspects of each of our wonderful and varied campuses.

It has brought departments together to talk about how they can best serve the students, staff, and faculty of the college. When you have an opportunity to tailor each portal site to a unique audience, it makes it much easier to present the information in a user-friendly way.

Here are some of the ways we will be using it:

Departmental sites for collaboration and document sharing. The Shared Documents function is everyone's favorite tool. It makes it so easy to edit and collaborate on writings. In a college with six campuses, with a nursing program that spans three of them, with other programs that involve all six, it is crucial to have instant communication among them all to assure academic consistency.

Part of the academic departmental sites will include sample syllabi and assignments, so that new instructors will have some examples of "Best Practices" to follow for their own courses. This is a part of our faculty mentoring process.

Specialized sites (like Phoenix Rising) for collaboration with colleagues outside the institution. DMACC partners with other community colleges and co-presents at national conferences. These special areas, with built-in discussion / chat features allow instant communication about the document being edited.

A special portal area for our proposed "Kids College" to serve elementary and middle school aged children. (The Boone Campus is doing a journalism camp next summer; our marketing department does a fun day for kids here at the Ankeny Campus, etc. We are hoping to expand and coordinate these efforts and have a dedicated portal area for these young DMACC students. The earlier they have fun and meaningful exposure to the school, the more likely they will be to attend. There are wonderful sites for children that I could bring in to their portal site. I've documented many of these when I've taught workshops for children's librarians around the state.)

Another portal dedicated to communicating with administrators, instructors, and students in our high school shared programs. The portal team is working with Randy Mead, the dean in charge of this department, to create a dynamic communication tool that will give them access to needed state documents, regulations, guidelines for post-secondary enrollment options, information, and facilitate interaction and make them all feel more a part of the college.

A special area for senior citizens who participate in our "Community Connections" program. These programs are hugely popular and are a wonderful way to connect with all our communities. Specialized information about genealogy, health care, creating a family history archive, winterizing your house, and other topics could easily be added to this special portal area.

Class sites for instructors who don't want the hassle of learning WebCT to web-enhance their classes. The class sites are extremely easy to use, and very engaging for the students and instructors both. They incorporate all the functions of the department sites, including announcements, events, pertinent web links, discussion lists, a documents area where students can collaborate on projects and where the instructor can post lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, and other information to enrich the learning experience.

On the Instructors' area of the portal, we have created an "Instructor's Toolbox," with links to pages we have created on such topics as "Using FrontPage," "Teaching Online," "Using the iPAQ Pocket PC," "Pedagogy for Web-based Instruction," and others. We are in the process of adding a page to this area that will highlight current grant opportunities for instructors.

Also in the Instructors' area, we are putting our online faculty handbook and our adjunct faculty handbook so instructors can easily find the information they need, from policies and procedures to where to find transparencies and staplers at each campus!

A page of links to often-used downloads – Acrobat viewer, PowerPoint viewer, Microsoft Reader, etc. – to make it easy for instructors, staff, and students to find the plug-ins they may need for a course.

An online student orientation done in a quest or game-type format. We already have an online orientation, and as we are updating it, we are storyboarding this new game.

We have hopes that as instructors and students get used to the portal, they will find other uses. We are looking at a joint project using iPAQs with our Land Surveying and Agriculture departments involving information gathering, with data collection being handled through the portal.

The Portal's Relationship to DMACC's Strategic Plan

Here are DMACC's Top Trends and Issues from its Strategic Plan, with some matches with the Portal Vision:

TOP TRENDS AND ISSUES

1. CAMPUS CLIMATE

- **Improve communication, spirit of cooperation, problem solving, respect and innovation between**

staff, faculty and students.

When it comes to communication, cooperation, and innovation, SharePoint has no equal. The portal will improve communication within and among departments, and will serve as a communication tool at all levels. Through the use of its built-in calendar, events, and announcements functions, information can be disseminated on a district, campus, department, and class level. The power of the portal lies in its tailoring needed information to the correct audience. "Just in time" and "just what you need" are phrases that come to mind in describing this set of features.

Information about student support services, the online student orientation, the portal's built-in discussion list and chat functions, all can serve to provide needed information to students. The possibility exists to have a student instantly connect with an advisor to ask questions online.

2. RESOURCES

- **Acquire new resources while better utilizing existing resources to meet ever-increasing student needs.**
- **Expand the use of technology at DMACC and address financial and cultural barriers that prevent effective service to underrepresented students.**

The portal is an effective way to increase faculty and student use of technology. All documentation and training will be provided through the portal, with streaming audio and video demonstrations of how to use the portal itself, as well as our technical manuals covering network logins, WebMail, SmartBoards, data projectors, iPAQs, tablet PC's, and all the other wonderful and ever-changing technologies available. This frees up time from technical instructors and network administrators who otherwise would spend countless hours in training. This is a very efficient use of existing resources.

It will also serve as a recruitment tool, both for students and for financial support. The "Kids College" site, which is designed to make DMACC a familiar and welcoming name to grade school and middle school age children, is one example of this. By connecting with this young audience, we can increase their recognition of the college as a great place to be. The high school shared programs site, then, can build on this recognition and show them what classes and programs are available to them through the Post-Secondary Enrollment and other programs. It can provide a seamless interface as students progress through their K-12 and college careers.

Expanding on that idea, a portal site for alumni could be created where they could see what is happening at DMACC, connect with former classmates, access the Iowa Career.net program, and be made aware of continuing education courses, gourmet dinners, special programs, international year activities, and other activities. It could also serve as a special fundraising site for the alumni, with a fundraising campaign specifically targeting this audience.

3. MARKETING/IMAGE

- **Increase the community's awareness of the quality and value of DMACC as the first choice for the first two years of a bachelor's degree and as the key factor in economic development through technical education**

Disseminating information and services, strengthening communication and collaboration with our partners in education and in business, showcasing programs and partnerships, all these

things will be facilitated through the portal. Again, tailoring information to targeted groups, sharing resources with senior citizens, school children, high school students, alumni, and partners, will be much easier to do. Each group will have its own "my.dmacc.edu" site of its very own, with dynamic and timely information, announcements, excellent web links, and discussion areas created specifically for them. The power of this personalized information delivery is very impressive. By giving our customers, whether students, parents, other educational institutions with whom we partner, alumni, area residents, or any of our varied clientele, exactly what they need, we enhance DMACC's image as an innovative, caring, collaborative member of the community, whether local or global.

4. INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

- **There is a demand for increased learner-centered flexibility in the scheduling of courses and the format of curriculum; customer expectation is that personal and professional needs will be met anytime, anywhere**
- **There is an increased necessity to form seamless educational opportunities (K-16) and to continually revise curriculum due to increased demands for accountability and skilled workers**
- **Many more students need remediation than receive it**

So welcome to SharePoint's flexibility in creating course websites! It is the cornerstone of our entire Educational Mobility Initiative. By making it so easy for an instructor to web-enhance a class, or even to create a web-based class, the possibilities in room use and in the use of human resources can be much better utilized. By employing the portal to post assignments, lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, even lecture snippets via streaming video, and by making use of the discussion lists and other communication tools (Did I mention the WhiteBoard?), students can collaborate and learn outside of class time. A classroom could conceivably be used for two classes by making part of each class available on the portal. Bringing learning to a student anytime, anyplace, whether using an iPAQ, a laptop, a PC, a Mac, is what mobility is all about.

5. LABOR FORCE

- **Growth and replacement needs need to be addressed in healthcare, business services, retail, service/hospitality, managerial/technology professions, equipment operations, education and construction**
- **Iowa's targeted industry clusters are life sciences, advanced manufacturing and information solutions**

Our nursing department is already starting to put clinical assignments and papers online, along with many other instructional tools. Other vocational programs are exploring the idea as well. So the portal not only serves as a communication tool with our business partners and with the targeted industries, but can help to educate students in those fields, as well.

6. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- **DMACC needs to conduct and make accessible research in the areas of student learning, success, and marketing**
- **Design a more systematic approach to continuous improvement**

Strategic Planning was actually one of the first areas for which the portal team created a departmental site. Where better to showcase the collaborative aspects of these departmental sites? By allowing each of the work groups (Campus Climate, Resources, Marketing/Image, Instructional Delivery, Labor Force, Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment, Diversity, and

AQIP) to post, edit, collaborate on, and share documents, much more can be done outside of the actual group meetings. It is a very efficient tool.

For research, too, the portal offers a very easy-to-use survey capability on all levels. So surveys can be targeted at specific groups, or be made available generally, depending on the information desired. By storing results in the database, the data can be accessed and manipulated as needed. And just as easily, the survey administrator can choose to publish those results to any audience or group selected.

The portal fits seamlessly into DMACC's new Strategic Plan, and can serve as an excellent vehicle for taking the school to new levels of excellence.

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Our mission, as defined in our Strategic Plan, is "Creating opportunities for your success." I see the portal as our gateway to possibilities and opportunities for our faculty, our staff, our students, our partners, and our communities.

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